

THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY

April 2012 – Week 3

Air Date: April 15 – April 21 (Sunday – Saturday)



TITLE: DEATH ON THE DOCKS

APRIL 1947 AND DEATH DOCKS IN TEXAS.

THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THIS STATION AND THE SAVE TEXAS HISTORY PROGRAM OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

APRIL 16, 1947. TEXAS CITY DOCKS. THE FRENCH SHIP *GRANDCAMP* IS BEING LOADED WITH TONS OF AMMONIUM NITRATE FERTILIZER. A SMALL FIRE IS SEEN IN THE HOLD; WORKERS STRUGGLE TO PUT IT OUT.

AT 9:12 AM THE SHIP EXPLODES.

THE MASSIVE BLAST DESTROYS THE DOCK, KNOCKS PLANES OUT OF THE SKY AND VAPORIZES TWO-DOZEN PEOPLE. FLAMING DEBRIS FALLS INTO THE CITY. WINDOWS SHATTER ON GALVESTON TEN MILES AWAY.

THE CAUSE WAS PROBABLY A CIGARETTE.

NEARBY, THE SHIP *HIGH FLYER*, ALSO CARRYING FERTILIZER, BEGINS TO BURN. AT 1 AM, IT EXPLODES. THE BLAST IS EVEN WORSE.

IT'S THE WORST INDUSTRIAL DISASTER IN AMERICAN HISTORY: OVER FIVE HUNDRED DEAD, TWO THOUSAND WOUNDED AND OVER 60 MILLION IN DAMAGES.

THE TEXAS CITY DISASTER WAS 65 YEARS AGO, THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY.

LEARN MORE AT SAVETEXASHISTORY.ORG OR CALL 800-998-4GLO.

"TEXAS CITY DISASTER," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lyt01>), accessed April 5, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

Elizabeth Lee Wheaton, "Texas City Remembers", San Antonio: Naylor, 1948 (<http://www.local1259iaff.org/texascityremembers.htm>), accessed April 5, 2012

"Texas City, Texas, Disaster – April 16, 17, 1947", *Fire Prevention and Engineering Bureau and the National Board of Fire Underwriters*, (<http://www.local1259iaff.org/report.htm>), accessed April 5, 2012

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

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